

HOUSE RESOLUTION 157

By Armstrong

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend James H. Childress, a
2014 Community Hero.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pause in its deliberations to honor those citizens who have been recognized for their devotion to their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such person is James H. Childress of Columbia, Tennessee, who has been named a 2014 Community Hero for his dedication to his community as the first African-American Fire Captain in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, James Childress was hired as a firefighter for the Columbia Fire Department (CFD) in 1988 and was promoted to driver and engineer a few years later; and

WHEREAS, he became the CFD's first African-American fire captain in 1994, during which time he was instrumental in computerizing the department and implementing fire management software to govern components such as fire equipment, response time, and personnel, combining his passion for technology and desire to serve his community to the utmost of his abilities; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, he transitioned to the city's Engineering Department as a Geographical Information Technician before retiring from the city in February 2008; and

WHEREAS, a native of Columbia, James Childress was educated in the Maury County School System, where he attended College Hill Elementary and graduated from Carver-Smith High School in 1964; and

WHEREAS, he later attended Columbia State Community College, completed courses with the National Radio Institute, and graduated from the Tennessee Technology Center with certifications in Computer Manufacturing Technology; and

WHEREAS, James H. Childress has a deep-seated love of technology and attended yearly workshops and courses to keep abreast of the fast evolution of technology and became a Microsoft Partner/Professional with certifications in Network Infrastructure and Management; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Childress was the owner of DataComm.Tek, a computer and network services company located in downtown Columbia; opened in 1990, it offered IT services to residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, he had to scale down his business when he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) but continued to provide services for a few customers remotely until he was forced to close DataComm.Tek's doors as his illness progressed; and

WHEREAS, now residing within the Long Term Care section of the VA Alvin C. York Medical Center in Murfreesboro, James Childress's love of technology continues as he uses a TOBII device with eye gaze capability to communicate, control various devices remotely, and email and text his family and friends; and

WHEREAS, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, James Childress enjoys the loving support of his wife, Freda, his daughter, Tara Thomas, and her husband, Millard Jr., and his two grandchildren, Millard III and Kameron Jamease; and

WHEREAS, James Childress is a man of faith and has been a devoted member of Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and True Vine Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, James Childress is a longtime member of Morning Star Lodge #11, Tullahoma Consistory #185, The United Supreme Council A.A.S.R. of Freemasonry, S.J., U.S.A., Prince Hall Affiliated. He is also a former board member of the H.O. Porter Scholarship Committee and a retired Vietnam Veteran; and

WHEREAS, James Childress has proven himself a dedicated public servant, and it is proper for him to be commended for the services rendered to his community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and

commend James H. Childress on the occasion of his being named a 2014 Community Hero and salute his historic legacy as Tennessee's first African-American Fire Captain.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.